
Software review

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The Anatomy Project. Carnforth: Parthenon. £68.00 per CD

The Anatomy Project is a collection of over 14 interactive CD-ROMs written for Windows and Macintosh platforms. Three of the CDs cover the neuroanatomy of the brain and spinal cord and were the subject of this review. The programmes have seven integral course levels ranging from undergraduate through to post-graduate.

The programmes contain the following modules: tutorials which use video dissections (still and real-time), medical imaging, histology and live action with video-graphic highlighting and voice-over narration. An interactive atlas with views and labelled structures for which the name and function can be provided by video-narrative and text. A video-narrative summary of each chapter, and finally a questions section with multiple choice questions and feedback in video-narrative.

Positive features

The programmes were very easy to install. Much thought has gone into their design and this makes them very easy to use with little need to resort to the on-line help. The material is professionally presented with excellent detailed pictures and video-narrative which gives interesting real life pictures of some disorders. The highest course level is compatible with the knowledge required for the MRCPsych exams.

Drawbacks

These in our view were minimal, the glossary was not exhaustive and when we used it to look up a word we had problems finding our way back to our place in the text or video. The video tutorials present a lot of information quite quickly and although they can be paused or replayed, the programme would not replace the need for a book.

Who would benefit from these programmes?

The CDs would be very useful for MRCPsych Part II candidates and by selecting a lower course level they would also be of use to medical students and other mental health staff.

Overall impressions

These are some of the best interactive programmes we have seen. Unlike so many computer CDs which are essentially books converted to an electronic format these have been designed for the technology and make full use of it. The result is a valuable and interesting product that will help trainees in this notoriously difficult area of study. In our view they are a 'must' for the library shelf. (A demonstration disc is available from <http://www.parthpub.com/tap/home.html>)

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